

A
LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

The Earl of Buckinghamshire,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR THE AFFAIRS OF INDIA,

On the Subject of an

OPEN TRADE

TO

INDIA.

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The Earl of Buckinghamshire

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MY LORD THE AFFAIRS OF INDIA

ADVICE regarding the proceedings

which have taken place at the East India

House, respecting the **INDIA** Company

pany's exclusive privileges, it is utterly im-

possible for any individual, who feels at all

interested in the welfare of his Country, and

the preservation of its Constitution, not to

experience sentiments of equal regret and

surprise at the communication made to the

Court of Directors in your Lordship's letter

of the 14th inst. viz. that the in-

tervention of His Majesty's Ministers to transfer

the Indian Trade 1813. Import and Export

to the Out-ports. In relation to the gracious

PRINTED BY WILLIAM PHILLIPS,

GEORGE YARD, LOMBARD STREET.

A LETTER, &c.

MY LORD,

AFTER perusing the proceedings which have taken place at the EAST INDIA HOUSE, respecting the Renewal of the Company's exclusive Privileges, it is utterly impossible for any individual, who feels at all interested in the welfare of his Country, and the preservation of its Constitution, not to experience sentiments of equal regret and surprise at the communication made to the Court of Directors, in your Lordship's Letter of 4th January, 1813, viz. that it was the intention of His Majesty's Ministers to transfer the Indian Trade, both Import and Export, to the Out-ports. In referring to the gracious speech of His Royal Highness the Prince

Regent at the opening of Parliament, it appears that his Royal Highness called upon the Legislature to make such an arrangement “as may best promote the prosperity of the British possessions in India, and at the same time secure the greatest advantages to the Commerce and Revenue of His Majesty’s Dominions.” If your Lordship be of opinion that by recommending Parliament to open the Trade to the Out-ports, you will fulfil the duties attached to your Lordship’s high station as President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, in a manner which will secure the greatest advantages to the Commerce and Revenue of His Majesty’s Dominions, I must deeply lament such a determination; and as there is still a short period left previously to its being discussed in Parliament, I do myself the honor of addressing this Letter to your Lordship, in which I shall endeavour to shew the impolicy of opening the Trade, even to the Port of London: after which I shall bring to your Lordship’s notice the fatal consequences which will result to the individuals

interested in the continuance of the East India Trade to the Port of London, should that trade be transferred to the Out-ports: and I shall conclude by recalling to your Lordship's recollection the opinions entertained on the subject of the India Trade by those enlightened statesmen now no more,* whose opinions while they lived, your Lordship and your noble coadjutors in office were always disposed to receive with deference.

The *importance* of the subject is admitted by all to be great, and as it must be evident *whence* that importance has arisen, it behoves those in whose hands the task of ensuring the greatest benefit to this country from our Indian possessions is placed, to guard against turning the stream from its present channel, through which such great advantages, in every point of view, have been realized to this kingdom; and not to permit so fruitful a source to expend itself in rivulets as insignificant, as the grounds for expecting that great benefits will be derived

* The Right Hon. Wm. Pitt. The Late Lord Melville.

from such a change, are unfounded and fallacious.

The first object in our Indian Trade which presents itself, to use the words of the late Lord Melville, "*is to furnish the means of exporting British Manufactures to the fullest extent, to bring raw materials from India, to open full scope to the remittance of fortunes from India, AND FINALLY TO CRUSH OR BRING TO THE RIVER THAMES THE CLANDESTINE TRADE.*" This it cannot be denied is or ought to be the principal object in any system which may be devised for our India Trade. Let me then ask your Lordship if the means of exporting British manufactures to the fullest extent have not been most amply attained when they can be purchased in India at prime cost, and when ships returning to India cannot get cargoes, because no one will send out goods, for the sale of which a market cannot be found.

I will ask your Lordship whether it is not a sufficient proof that the raw materials have been imported from India to the fullest ex-

tent, when the warehouses of this country are groaning under unsaleable produce?

I will ask your Lordship whether it is not a sufficient proof, that Indian commerce has been extended greatly beyond the bounds of policy, when individuals waive the mode of remitting home their fortunes through commerce, and avail themselves of drawing on the Company's Home Treasury to a most enormous extent?

It is only then on the principle, that greater advantages would be derived to the country in the way of revenue, and a greater number of individuals benefited, that a change in the commercial system of India, as at present carried on, can with any justice be urged. It will therefore be well to consider in the first instance, whether those two advantages are likely to be realized by opening the Trade, and whether it is worth while to hazard an experiment, in the trial of which, the banks that confine the trade within its present fruitful channel, will be irrevocably broken down and destroyed.

With respect to the increase in the Revenue.—No one will deny that the greater the quantity of goods imported, the greater the duty will be; but as the duty is not payable till the goods are sold, it will follow of course that till the period of sale arrive, the Revenue will not be benefited.

With respect to the Exports, it is true the case is different, because the greater the export, the greater is the immediate benefit to the Home Treasury, as all goods pay duty before they are shipped for foreign parts.

It will not be denied that the exports to India ought to be regulated by the price which European goods sell at in India. An overflow of European exports will cause a depreciation in the value, consequently the exports must be abridged till the scarcity of goods in the Indian market brings the price to the standard at which it will yield a profit to the merchant. The same reasoning applies to the Import Trade; for if the Exports either yield little profit, or are attended with

loss, then the private trader must send bullion or find credit in India to purchase goods for the European market. In the present state of the country an exportation of bullion cannot be made, and if the goods are to be bought on credit, the promise of payment can only be made on the assumption that the goods will find a sale.

The produce of India now in this country in Company's goods, and goods of the Private Trader, amounts in value to no less a sum than Ten Millions sterling; and it is admitted that British Manufactures may be purchased in Calcutta for less than the original prime cost in England: * the natural deduction then is, that there is already more India produce in this country than we can get rid of and that our Exports to India, greatly exceed the demand made for them.

* This fact is not solely incidental to years of war but to those of peace, for it can be incontestibly proved that in 1788 and 1789, many articles of British manufacture sold at Calcutta, for less than one half of the original prime cost in England, and this has occasionally happened at different times since that period, when the markets have been glutted with British merchandize.

What then can be expected from an open Trade? What advantage can be derived? The Imports and Exports, may probably be greater, but of what benefit if not saleable? It must be evident, even to the meanest capacity, that it will be the source of embarrassment rather than assistance, to the revenue, as the capitals hazarded in such a trade can never be expected to return common interest, and the sinking those capitals in such purchases will be a positive evil to Great Britain, by locking up funds, which might otherwise be employed for more beneficial purposes.

It appears clearly by the statement made by a Director in his place, at the discussion at the East India House on the 26th ultimo, that the whole of the Trade or return of India to all the European States, by the medium of America, by Foreigners, and through Great Britain, will be required to make a remittance to England, according to the present state of affairs with that country.

By the printed papers, page 56, it appears that the Trade, on an average of Six years, was as follows; it is probably nearly the same amount at present, viz.

Imports from India by the East India Company	} £ 1,351,483
Ditto by Commanders and Officers of the Company's Ships .	} 323,167
Ditto by British Private Traders	946,956
Ditto by Americans	800,547
Ditto by Foreign Europeans	406,292
	3,828,445
European Disbursement for the Territory, which must be returned	} 850,000
Interest of the Debt, which is at the option of the holders to have Bills for	} 1,500,000
Cloathing for the Armies abroad	300,000
Exports by the Company	500,000
By the Captains and Officers	469,956
By the Private Traders	500,072
	4,120,028
Sum that may be possibly remitted through China	} 500,000
	3,620,028

If this statement be correct, even supposing that goods or bullion be sent out in addition to India, how are the returns from India to be made? since here is the whole of the Trade from India to Europe and America absorbed for the return that must at present be made.

Your Lordship appears convinced of the necessity of the China Trade remaining a monopoly; and as India has contributed at times in a degree to the China investment, and as the company has made successful efforts to widen the circle of their commerce from India to China, so as to diminish the quantity of bullion required in the China market; it cannot surely be considered expedient to weaken the credit of the Company by withdrawing from them the Indian part of their exclusive privileges. Will it not even upon the supposition (though unfounded) that the Indian Trade has been upon the whole a losing one to the Company, be hazardous to take it from them, when the connexion of the India and China

Trade has rendered the whole a profitable concern.

It is too true that sanguine hopes are indulged by many persons as to the great emoluments which would arise from an open trade to India. But these individuals do not advert to the situation the Company would be in if dispossessed of their exclusive rights. If their Charter should be taken away, the Company would be a body corporate in perpetuity, and entitled to trade upon its joint Stock. The most important seats of Trade in India, viz. Calcutta, Fort St. George, Bombay, besides the island of St. Helena, belong to the Company. These possessions are their patrimonial property, and cannot be taken from them. In addition to these all the Factories and Commercial Establishments, both in India and the Eastern seas, unquestionably belong to them; these possessions were conveyed to them by the London Company, under parliamentary faith, and a Royal Charter: they were permitted to build fortifications to protect their factories, and they were to be allowed to carry

on a Trade on their joint Stock, though the exclusive privileges should cease. Under these circumstances it may be asked whether individuals, ignorant in every point of view of Asiatic commerce, will hazard a Trade in competition with the East India Company. To use the arguments of the late Lord Melville, “ It is easy for the speculator
 “ while he merely considers the extent of
 “ our dominions in India, and that they are
 “ inhabited by fifty millions of our subjects,
 “ to fancy that he will find unbounded sale
 “ for his goods, but he does not reflect that
 “ the climate is against the wear of most of
 “ our manufactures ; he does not reflect
 “ that the religious prejudices of many of
 “ the casts of the natives forbid their using
 “ them : he knows not that the dress of the
 “ natives is as fixed and local as their manners : it is easy also for the speculator to
 “ suppose that in such a country as India
 “ he will find a market for any quantity of
 “ Earthenware,* but he does not reflect on

* It may not be wandering from the subject to remark, that whilst Ministers are receiving daily Peti-

“ the bulk of the commodity : he has not
 “ estimated the amount of the freight of it,
 “ or if he has, he does not know that the
 “ religious prejudices of many of the Casts
 “ forbid their using what has been fabrica-
 “ ted by the impure hands of infidel strangers.
 “ It is easy for the speculator to imagine
 “ that if he could find sales for his Cottons
 “ in India, his riches would keep pace with
 “ his desires : does he hope to rival his
 “ master in an art in which he is only an
 “ imitator, or can he expect, comparing the
 “ high price of labor in Europe with the
 “ low price of it in India, that he can under-
 “ sell him there ?”

David Macpherson, Esq. in his History of
 Commerce with India, in page 362, says :

“ The Hindoo born and desirous to pass his

tions from the Manufacturers of Staffordshire, complain-
 ing of the want of vent for their China, that the Li-
 censes granted by the Board of Trade for a partial
 Trade to the Continent, has been the cause of an im-
 portation to this country of Continental China in such
 quantities that its cheapness has been the cause of
 keeping our Manufactures entirely out of the market.

“ life in the same country where his ances-
 “ tors, through a long succession of ages,
 “ were born and passed their lives, whose
 “ food is rice, whose drink is water or milk,
 “ to whom wine or strong liquor is an object
 “ of abomination, and who if he strictly acts
 “ up to his religious principles, would soon-
 “ er lay down his life than put any living
 “ creature to death, or permit a morsel of
 “ animal food to enter his mouth, whose
 “ warm climate renders any clothing beyond
 “ what decency requires intolerable, and
 “ whose light clothing is made by himself
 “ and his family from the cotton produced in
 “ his own fields, whose customs and religion,
 “ to which he adheres with the most inflexi-
 “ ble constancy, render utterly inadmissible
 “ many articles of enjoyment and comfort,
 “ which our habits have rendered almost
 “ necessary to our existence, can never have
 “ any desire to acquire the produce or ma-
 “ nufactures of Europe.† Hence it is evi-

† “ The Committee of the House of Commons on
 “ the East India Company’s Affairs in May, 1809, ex-
 “ amined several merchants of London *who have resided*

“dent that the exportation of European
 “goods of any kind must be, and must ever
 “remain on a scale very contracted com-
 “pared to the population of the country,
 “the demand being in a great measure con-
 “fined to the small handful of Europeans,
 “who are either in the service of the Com-
 “pany or living under their protection.”

I have seen no arguments advanced which
 carry conviction with them in favor of an
 open Trade; and I cannot conceive any
 regulations can be framed, should the Trade
 be transferred to the Out-ports, which will
 secure our possessions in India from being
 over-run by desperate speculators from all

“in India, and now act as agents, who give it as their
 “*general opinion* that the exportation of British Goods
 “to India might be greatly extended. *But when they*
 “*were pressed by the Committee to be more particular*
 “*they acknowledged, THAT A FULL CONCESSION OF ALL*
 “THE FACILITIES THEY COULD DESIRE WOULD ONLY
 “OPERATE TO MAKE BRITISH GOODS CHEAPER IN INDIA,
 “WHERE ACCORDING TO THE EVIDENCE OF SOME GEN-
 “TLEMEN BEFORE THE SAME COMMITTEE THEY ARE
 “ALREADY TOO PLENTIFUL AND TOO CHEAP, BUT
 “COULD NOT INCREASE THE CONSUMPTION AMONG
 “THE NATIVES.”

parts of the British dominions, indeed from every part of Europe ; who would purchase goods of any quality, ruin of course the quality of Indian manufactures, and by sending the produce of them indiscriminately to all the European markets, soon put a period to the Trade ; for it is out of the power of your Lordship, in the event of an open trade from the Out-ports, to frame regulations, which would oblige every speculator to bring to Great Britain his cargo, when he knows that by proceeding direct to other parts of Europe, his gain will be sufficient, after meeting any penalty which may be inflicted upon him for such deviation on his return to this country (should he ever return), unless your Lordship has been fortunate enough to discover a principle which is superior in the mind of a speculator to that of *self interest*. It is an unfortunate truth, that individuals are to be found in every nation ready to aid in schemes of enterprize, in direct opposition to the interests of their country ; and it is the unsuccessful result of such adventures

that induces them to be guilty of acts, at the bare thought of which, they would have shuddered in the first instance.

It is said that the speculations will be circumscribed by the means which the individuals concerned therein possess. To prove that this will not be the case, it is only necessary for me to refer your Lordship to the grant made by Parliament the 4th of April, 1811, (51 Geo. 3, cap. 15) of six millions, to assist the credit of individuals who had speculated to such an enormous extent in the South American trade, the result of which it was to be hoped would have in some degree allayed that spirit; but unfortunately it appears to have been only smothered for a time, to burst out with greater fury. Would it be credited by those who lived twenty years ago, that an individual should have had the effrontery to trade to the extent of half a million, upon a capital of twenty thousand pounds? My Lord, this spirit of speculation, by carrying the exports to such an extent, may be of a tem-

porary assistance to His Majesty's Treasury, but to any man accustomed to look a little into futurity, it must appear to be a system pregnant with the most ruinous consequences to the individual trader, as well as to the country at large.

These extensive speculations, in which individuals have been encouraged to embark under false prospects of gain, have created a degree of luxury which it is impossible to contemplate without the most serious apprehension; under the imaginary wealth which is calculated upon as realized, the establishments of men are encreased, the shop is given up for the warehouse, the appellation of shopkeeper is despised, and that of merchant is assumed; carriages and equipages follow, till at last it is discovered that the speculation turns out contrary to the cherished expectations; instead of large fortunes being realized, great losses are sustained, and the goods which have been sent out on speculation, and paid for by bills forming a fictitious capital, are sold (if sold at all)

for half the prime cost, the inevitable consequence of which is, that a succession of bankruptcies takes place : not only the manufacturer and speculator suffer, but the actual revenue of the country is lessened, for had the individual gone on in the regular course of business, he would have been looked upon as a regular contributor towards defraying the expences of the nation. Such proceedings must give rise to fallacious opinions as to the actual revenue of the country, for as long as the spirit of speculation is encouraged, so long will the revenue of this country *apparently* flourish ; but such a system can only be compared to a rapid decline, which we endeavour to persuade ourselves will not end fatally, and we are deceived by the appearances, which grow more favorable the nearer the sufferer approaches to the last moment of his existence.

It may be said, my Lord, that I have overdrawn the picture of distress attendant on the spirit of Speculation which at present

pervades this country ; but on a reference to the weekly Gazettes, they will be found to bear ample testimony to the truth of the coloring.

It is said that the Trade, as now carried on, is to the total exclusion of the British merchant ; surely it must have escaped recollection that, by the Act of 1793, the Company is required to set apart three thousand tons annually, for the use of private persons, which have never been occupied to even half the extent ; and it appears from indisputable authority, that the quantity of tonnage engaged by the East India Company, for the Private Traders of the United Kingdom (exclusively of that allowed to be exported in the Privilege of their own captains and officers) amounted, during the last twenty years, to Sixty Thousand Tons, and that during that period, only Twenty-two Thousand Tons of every species of manufacture (including beer, and seven thousand tons of wine) have been actually engaged and shipped to India : and at this very moment,

my Lord, when a want of tonnage is so loudly complained of to export British manufacture, Country Ships are under the necessity of returning to India without cargoes, no individual being inclined to ship goods for which he knows too well there is not any sale in the Indian markets.

The leading arguments made use of by the Supporter of an Open Trade, are founded upon the doctrine held by Dr. Adam Smith, whose opinions on the subject of Monopoly, will always, theoretically speaking, carry great weight, but when deduced to practice will lose much of their convincing powers. He continually sets up *theory* against *experience*, and *possibilities* against facts. Monopolies are only bad when they engross a Trade to the prejudice of the community at large, and oblige them to become purchasers of indispensable commodities at an exorbitant rate, whereas the Monopoly, if it can be so called, (considering the general acceptation of the word) enjoyed by the East India Company, enables the inha-

bitants of this kingdom to obtain every article of Indian produce at the very lowest possible rate, and of the best quality.

While I am as much disposed as any other individual to receive with deference the doctrines enforced by so able a writer as Adam Smith, I cannot shut my ears to the arguments of men who have been held in equal estimation for their talents and knowledge in national policy : I shall therefore quote the opinion of Wattel, referred to by Mr. Macpherson, in his Work, page 342, viz. “ Commerce is the common good of the “ nation, all the members of which have an “ equal right to it. Monopoly is therefore “ in general contrary to that right. To this “ rule *there are nevertheless some exceptions* “ *founded upon the* GENERAL INTEREST OF THE “ NATION : and in some cases “ a WISE Go- “ vernment * *may justly establish a Mono-*

* *A wise government.* His Majesty's present government may possibly feel that they cannot lay claim to such a justification for continuing the exclusive privilege of the Company.

“ *poly.* There are some commercial enter-
 “ prizes which cannot be accomplished with-
 “ out an armed force, and require great
 “ capitals beyond the power of private
 “ individuals. THERE ARE OTHERS WHICH
 “ WOULD SOON RUIN THE UNDERTAKERS, IF THEY
 “ WERE NOT CONDUCTED WITH GREAT PRUDENCE
 “ AND HARMONY OF COUNCILS, TOGETHER WITH
 “ AN UNREMITTING PERSEVERANCE IN ESTABLISH-
 “ ED MAXIMS AND RULES. As such branches of
 “ Commerce cannot be carried on by indi-
 “ viduals; Companies are formed under the
 “ authority of Government, AND AS SUCH
 “ COMPANIES CANNOT BE SUPPORTED IF OTHERS
 “ ARE PERMITTED TO INTERFERE IN THEIR TRADE,
 “ IT IS ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NATION AT LARGE
 “ THAT CERTAIN PRIVILEGES SHOULD BE CON-
 “ FIRMED TO THEM.”

A noble author* writing on the subject of
 Political Œconomy, observes, that Commerce
 pushed to the extent to which the spirit of
 speculation would induce individuals to

* Lord Kaimes.

carry it, would involve not only themselves but their country in inevitable ruin; it may therefore be urged with great reason, that the Indian Trade being reserved to the East India Company, not only causes a regular and ample supply of Indian produce, but is the cause of preventing numerous individuals from embarking in a trade, which cannot produce to the nation at large, much less to the persons who seek to have the India and China Trade thrown open, those advantages which are so strenuously held forth, but so delusively conceived. It is no easy matter to convince any set of men of their error, who fancy their interests and fortunes are concerned in prosecuting a measure, no matter how absurd, when calmly contemplated; it therefore becomes an imperative duty on those who have the power in their own hands, not to get rid of it before they are convinced it will not be used in a manner detrimental to the state.

At the meetings of our Manufacturing Towns, it has been Resolved, that the exclu-

sive privileges of the East India Company are a monopoly, and that it is for the interest of the manufacturers that the monopoly should be done away. In the words of the late Lord Melville, I would wish to ask the Projectors of such Resolutions, whether they have examined what the Company has been, or what it now is? To whom do they owe the Riches which they have acquired from the Cotton Manufactures? To the East India Company! To whom do they owe the Riches which they have acquired from the cultivation of Indigo? To the East India Company! To whom has Great Britain been indebted for the great increase of its Shipping? To the East India Company! If from other sources our industry and navigation have been encreased, the original obligation is not on that account the less, and ought not to be forgotten: some small gratitude is surely due for all these benefits.

“ The representation of the grievous hardships of excluding the great body of the nation from the Trade for the benefit of

“ the few is *very plausible, and likely to catch*
 “ *the assent of those who do not bestow much*
 “ *thought upon the matter.* Let us consider
 “ the effect of an abolition of this hardship.
 “ In the great body of the nation there are
 “ but very few individuals desirous of enter-
 “ ing actively into the Trade ; therefore all
 “ the rest of the people, being at least
 “ ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and
 “ ninety-nine in one hundred thousand feel
 “ no deprivation of which they do not de-
 “ sire to have. The truth is, that the abo-
 “ lition of the Company’s privileges would
 “ deprive them of their Rights held under
 “ the sanction of the law ; and very much
 “ impair the property of all the proprietors
 “ of India Stock. Neither ought it to be
 “ forgotten that there are at all times some
 “ Proprietors of the Stock of this envied
 “ monopoly who are willing to dispose of it,
 “ and that no person of either sex, or of
 “ whatever condition, age, religion or coun-
 “ try is debarred from purchasing.”

It is generally admitted that for the first

three or four years, the Indian Trade may be carried on at a loss, but it will ultimately prove beneficial. I may be permitted to ask, whether the Revenue of this Country is in so flourishing a state that Ministers can afford to risque a certain income of between four and five Millions in that time; and what is proposed to be done with the produce of India which shall be brought to this country, the warehouses of which are overstocked to the amount of ten Millions? and, *vice versa*, with respect to the export of British manufactures to India, which may be bought there for prime cost?

The result of an Open Trade will be the accumulation of difficulty and misfortune.

I now come to the proposition for a transfer of the Trade to the Out-ports. The arguments already urged against opening the Trade even to the port of London, will apply with a redoubled force to this proposition; I shall therefore proceed, as I proposed, to point out to your Lordship the

ruin which will result to the individuals interested in a continuance of the East India Trade to the Port of London, should it be removed to the Out-ports.

My Lord, this is a part of the subject which calls for more consideration than has hitherto been given to it, as it not only involves the livelihood of a numerous body of the poorer classes of the community, but it goes to nothing short of utter ruin to the individuals engaged in the following branches of Trade, as connected with the present system of conducting the Indian commerce, viz.

To a most numerous body of Merchants and Traders, engaged in the India and China Trade, from the port of London, all of the highest respectability in the commercial world :

To the several persons concerned, employed, and interested, in the building or equipment of East India Shipping in the port of London :

To the numerous class of Commanders

and Officers in the Naval service of the East India Company:

To the Manufacturers of Long Ells, resident in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Gloucester, added to which are the Dyers, Setters and Calendriers, Packers, Inspectors of Woollen Goods, Pressers and Cloth Drawers; all employed in the service of the East India Company.

The first class of individuals, viz. the Merchants and Traders, has sent three Petitions to Parliament, and each of the other classes has also petitioned the Legislature. This is a mode of expostulation to which it cannot be supposed they would have resorted, if the injury they anticipated by opening the Trade, were not great, indeed little less than ruinous to them.

The Common Council of the City of London, has also petitioned Parliament, and the Inhabitants of the Town of Gravesend. It may, my Lord, be considered futile, to quote some of the bodies before mentioned,

but it must be allowed, that even individually, they carry much respectability with them, and collectively, it is impossible to point out so large a number of his Majesty's subjects more deserving of the care of the Legislature, in every point of view, than those herein enumerated; and that individual must be a very subtle reasoner indeed, who can adduce arguments sufficiently convincing, to prove not only the policy, but what is more worthy of attention, the *justice* of injuring one part of His Majesty's subjects, by depriving them of a trade in which they have embarked their lives and fortunes, and from which this country has in times of distress reaped the most essential benefits, to throw it into the hands of individuals, who at the best are but speculators, indulging themselves in wild theories of fancied and endless riches.

It is not necessary for me to point out to your Lordship, the great injury that will arise to the Merchants, by transferring the Indian Trade to the Out Ports, as I am sure

your Lordship must have given so important a part of the subject that consideration which it demands. I shall therefore content myself with entreating your Lordship's attention to a few observations in favor of the other classes, as the causes of the grievances they will suffer, cannot be so evident to your Lordship.

The persons concerned in the building and equipment of East India Shipping, are Ship Builders, Shipwrights, Ship Chandlers, Mast Makers, Block and Pump Makers, Boat Builders, Ship Joiners, Ship Plumbers, Ship Painters and Glaziers, Smiths, Copper Smiths, Anchor Smiths, Rope Makers, Sail Makers, Riggers, Lightermen and Watermen. The persons carrying on the trades abovementioned have long been engaged therein, and have constructed and built large Docks, Manufactories and Warehouses, Storehouses and other premises, at great expence; they have invested large Capitals, and have engaged numerous workmen.

The Establishments so formed have been encreased and carried to an extent which has tended to characterize the Port of London, in its naval establishment, as the most extensive of any in the known world. The removal of the trade to the Out Ports would consequently prove ruinous to the individuals whose capitals have been embarked in the formation of the said establishments. The numerous classes of workmen and artizans employed therein, have become attached by long residence to the places where the said trades have been carried on, and connected by marriage with families settled about those establishments. These poor people would be thrown out of employment, and cast upon the world without the smallest chance of finding employment at the Out Ports, where it must naturally be supposed are to be found men accustomed to the different branches of equipping and fitting out Shipping, and who are equally attached to the parts where they have long resided, and who would be naturally jealous of having their labours superseded by nu-

merous classes of artizans from the Metropolis.

Another very important point for consideration presents itself in the removal of the Trade to the Out Ports; by such an act, the country will be deprived of a resource in times of immediate danger and emergency, inasmuch as the building of India Shipping in the Thames, concentrates in one spot a numerous body of mechanics, who have already rendered the most essential services to the naval power of the country, and who are always capable of affording their united services at a few hours notice, in cases of any great national calamity, an object which even great sacrifices ought to be made to attain; added to which, the large scale of India Shipping has supplied, at moments most critical to the welfare of the country, great addition to its naval strength, a resource which would be lost if the Trade were thrown open, as the Shipping which would be employed at the Out Ports would be of so small a class, as to render

them wholly unfit to be converted into Ships of War.

This statement, my Lord, of the injury which will accrue to the India shipping interest by a transfer of the trade to the Out Ports, will, I hope, meet with the consideration it merits, and I shall quote the speech of My Lord Castlereagh, in the House of Commons, on the Shipping of the Company, in May 1803. “His Lordship could not but
 “ suggest to the consideration of the House,
 “ that the Shipping in the service of the
 “ East India Company was of a nature to be
 “ at any time converted into a great addition to *the National force of the Empire.*
 “ The Ships of 1200 tons might upon any
 “ public exigency be armed as Ships of the
 “ Line ; the Ships of 800 tons might be equally
 “ employed as Frigates, and those of 500 tons
 “ might be employed as Sloops of War.”

With how much more reason may that argument be urged at the present moment, when the war we are involved in with America behoves us to attend as much as we

possibly can to the augmentation of our Naval power.

I shall now, my Lord, draw your attention to the injury that will be suffered by the third class, viz. The commanders and officers of the Ships in the Company's service.

The Naval Service of the East India Company has been looked upon for a long period of years as a *national establishment*: the sons of respectable families have entered into that service with a view of supporting themselves and those depending upon them, and it has been frequently the case, so highly respectable is the naval service of the Company considered, from the qualifications required to enable individuals to fill the situation of officers in it, that time served in it was formerly taken as part of the period required to be served in the Royal Navy, to qualify for a Lieutenancy: the officers concerned in the naval service of the Company, have enjoyed advantages which no other persons can possibly have, who trade alto-

gether upon their own accounts; they have been always intent upon finding out new articles of Exports and Imports, without success, and it may be fairly concluded, that no new system can be devised which will give such encouragement to speculation, as one which has appropriated one-twelfth of the whole shipping employed, to such a number of individuals *free of the charge for freight*, and who are all intent upon making the greatest advantage of the indulgence given to them.

If, therefore, the Company's exclusive privileges be annihilated, or materially intrenched upon, the Naval service of the Company must fall to decay, and the utter ruin of the numerous class of persons " who
 " have hitherto been considered as having a
 " right, unless forfeited by misconduct, to
 " look up to the Company for constant em-
 " ployment, with the reasonable prospect of
 " making a competent fortune before old
 " age renders repose desirable and neces-
 " sary, and with an assurance in case of

“ failure of being protected and supported
 “ by the Company in a way not unsuitable
 “ to their rank in life. Must such valuable
 “ men when bending under the weight of
 “ years if their endeavours to obtain inde-
 “ pendent competency have been unsucces-
 “ ful be turned adrift to starve, or to seek
 “ such employment as their diminished pow-
 “ ers of exertion may be capable of in situa-
 “ tions inferior in emolument and respecta-
 “ bility to those they have held in the Com-
 “ pany’s service ; or *can* the Company sup-
 “ port them when their own funds which
 “ have hitherto so liberally provided ease and
 “ competency for their superannuated ser-
 “ vants of every description who have been
 “ in need of assistance shall be torn from
 “ them. Will unconnected Private Mer-
 “ chants, attending to their own gain only,
 “ make them any compensation in lieu of
 “ the respectable establishments which they
 “ propose to abolish ? Will they make any
 “ such provision for those who wear out their
 “ lives in their service ? The same argu-
 “ ments will apply to the Company’s retired

“ Military servants, also to their Civil ser-
 “ vants abroad, and those on their Home
 “ Establishment.”

I now come to the case of the Woollen Manufacturers in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Gloucester; the individuals concerned in this important branch of the Company's Export Trade, have also been at the expence of erecting warehouses, buildings, and machinery, for the purpose of more effectually carrying on the Woollen manufactories for the Export Trade of the Company. These manufacturers employ upwards of twenty thousand labourers, and consume the wool of nearly a million of sheep; they most essentially benefit the agricultural interest of the beforementioned counties, at a period when all other channels of trade are shut. An increase in the export of the said articles cannot with any prospect of gain be adopted, as the East India Company has already completely glutted the foreign markets; the opening the trade therefore, my Lord, would be to

the Woollen manufacturers of this kingdom, concerned with the East India Company, a most severe and ruinous act; it would not only be productive of most serious deprivation to them, and entire ruin to many thousand families, but there is every reason to believe, that the present Export of British manufactures would be lost, not only to the counties already mentioned, but to England.*

The Dyers of the East India Company are obliged to have been a certain length of

* It may possibly be observed, that if the trade should be thrown open, an equal, if not a greater supply of woollens would be required, by which the manufacturers would experience no loss: that this would not be the case is acknowledged by the manufacturers themselves, in their petition to Parliament. It is only by a regular system requiring a regular annual supply, that the manufacturers are enabled to keep the same number of workmen employed, and ensure the superior manufacture of their goods. With respect to a greater quantity of woollens being required by the open trader, the same argument which has already been made use of, may be again referred to, viz. "Where is the use of exporting goods for which there is no market?" and can it be supposed that the manufacturers would petition against their own interests, if they thought an open trade would be beneficial to them?

time in the business before they can be appointed to that situation, they are obliged to have their dye-houses and plants furnished and fitted up in a particular manner, the expence attendant on which is not less than £200,000. ; should therefore the trade be thrown open, the establishments in which so large a sum has been expended will be rendered useless, and the consequence will be ruinous to this class of individuals connected with the Company.

The Setters and Calendrers have also expended large sums of money in the necessary establishments, which in case of the dispersion of the East India Company's Trade, would be dismantled, causing great injury not only to the freehold proprietor, but to the individuals in this branch of trade, as there is no other course of life to which they can turn to get a living, and the situation of their workmen would be in the highest degree distressing.

The Packers are a body of tradesmen em-

ployed by the Company, who are obliged to serve a regular apprenticeship to make them competent to be taken into the service of the Company. The removal of the Company's trade would in this particular branch occasion incalculable injury to a very great body of his Majesty's subjects. So great is the confidence reposed in this class of tradesmen by the Company, that Woollen manufactures, to the extent of a million sterling annually, are placed under their final care till ready for shipping. The particular manner in which the goods for packing are delivered out week by week, for nine months in the year, gives regular employment to great numbers of the poorer class, and by the regular payment of the Company, proves a most beneficial thing to a very great body of the community; a removal of the trade to the Out Ports would impose certain ruin on this class connected with the Company.

The Inspectors of Woollen Goods to the Company, are sworn Officers, they are men of long tried abilities, and would be lite-

rally thrown out of all means whereby they could gain a livelihood if the Trade should be transferred to the Out Ports.

The same fatal effects would be felt by the Pressers and Cloth Drawers employed by the Company. By the removal therefore of the Trade to the Out Ports, the classes herein enumerated would be deprived of the means by which they can earn their livelihood, their property would be annihilated, and the speculative advantage to one set of individuals would be founded on positive ruin to many others.

The Buyers of Piece Goods and others interested in the sale of East India Piece Goods will be most materially affected by the Trade being transferred to the Out-ports. I shall make use of their own words, as contained in the Resolutions adopted at a Meeting, held on the 22d April, 1812, to point out the injury that will arise to them, viz.

“ That as Piece Goods are of an uncertain value, and depend very much on competition, it would not be possible to obtain for them at an Out-port the same prices as in London ; and, consequently, that we should be undersold at the Out-ports, unable to carry on our business with the honour, respectability, and advantage we have hitherto done, and probably obliged to abandon the pursuit many of us have been engaged in for a great number of years, and driven to seek fresh undertakings, at a time when little benefit can be expected from them. And it is the opinion of this meeting, that it is the decided interest of the importers of Piece Goods themselves, that they should be continued to be brought to sale in the port of London (as the emporium of commerce) in the way that they now are, where they will have the benefit of the Company's own assortment.”

“ That in all silk and prohibited goods, and even in white goods, if not brought to the port of London, it is much to be feared, no

restraints could prevent smuggling ; which would occasion a loss of the whole duty to government, be seriously injurious to the fair trader, and especially to the manufacturers of silk goods in Spitalfields and elsewhere."

"That the introduction of Indian piece goods to the consumption of this kingdom at low prices, in consequence of a total evasion of duty, or a payment of duty on reduced prices, would be a serious injury to the British cotton manufacturers."

"That the same ill effects would occur to the manufacturers of Lancashire and Scotland, if sales of Indian piece goods were frequently to be made at Liverpool and Glasgow, or in any of the ports in the neighbourhood of the manufactories."

"That it is of the greatest advantage to the great body of British cotton manufacturers to confine the import of India piece goods to one port, as it gives them the opportunity

of viewing them, and regulating their manufactures, according to the quantity and sorts intended for sale; whereas if individuals were allowed to import piece goods, and sell them at an outport, the British manufacturer would never know what quantity might be brought into the market, or how to regulate his manufactory."

"That the principal factories in India for muslins, callicoes, and silk goods, being in the hands of our East-India Company, and the greatest attention being paid to maintain the qualities and fabrics of each sort, it is reasonable to conclude, that the same influx of foreigners, who purchase very large quantities of the national manufactures, will attend the sales at the India House (whenever the politics of Europe will allow them to come) as used to resort here for a series of years, provided the quantity exposed to sale by the East-India Company is of sufficient importance to draw their attention."

"That the plan now pursued, of having

periodical half yearly sales of piece goods, and publishing a declaration, every three months previous to the sale, prevents every merchant and manufacturer from being suddenly surprized by an excessive quantity being brought on, and enables the foreign buyer to make his arrangements to attend the sale, or to send his orders."

Another establishment of great magnitude and importance to the City of London, as well as to the individual concerned, will be rendered useless by a transfer of the Indian Trade to the Out-ports, and it is only necessary for me to refer to the Act of the Legislature to impress upon your Lordship's mind the necessity of giving this part of the subject due consideration, before you proceed to recommend measures which must involve the dearest interests of the several persons connected therewith.

By the Act of 43 Geo. III. cap. 126, An Act for the further improvement of the Port of London, by making Docks and other Works at

Blackwall, for the accommodation of the East India Shipping in the said Port, it is enacted that, Whereas the Ships in the employ of the East India Company are of larger size than other Vessels employed by Merchants in Trade, and many of them nearly equal in bulk to the Ships of the Line in the Royal Navy; And whereas the Cargoes and Merchandize on board of such Ships ARE OF GREAT VALUE AND NATIONAL IMPORTANCE; and whereas by the present system of loading and discharging the Cargoes of such Ships, the Navigation of the River Thames is frequently impeded, and delays, losses and inconveniencies experienced, and the Cargoes of such Ships are subject to plunder, and the East India Company and Owners thereof injured and THE PUBLIC REVENUE DEFRAUDED TO A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT; And whereas if GOOD AND SUFFICIENT WET DOCKS and Basons, with necessary accommodations and requisites for the reception of East India Ships were made at or near Blackwall, in the County of Middlesex, the evils and mischiefs aforesaid might be greatly remedied and prevented, &c. &c. The Act then goes on to recite under what terms,

&c. the said Docks should be built, and the money raised for the purpose.

In Sect. 12 of the said Act, provision is made for the half-yearly payment of the interest on the money borrowed; and in Sect. 13, the application of the money so borrowed, is directed, first, in paying the *Charges incurred in the passing the said Act; next, in paying and discharging the consideration of purchase money and other costs, and afterwards in* PAYING SUCH YEARLY OR OTHER SUMS OF MONEY AS THEREIN DIRECTED, FOR COMPENSATION FOR LOSSES AND DEFICIENCY OF TYTHES, TAXES, SEWER RATES AND OTHER RATES AND ASSESSMENTS, &c. &c.

In Sec. 91 it is stated, that in consideration of the great charges and expences in making the said Docks, the rates mentioned in the said Act should be paid by ships loading or unloading.

In Sect. 110 it is enacted, that none of the *restrictions for Ships loading or unloading in*

the East India Company's Dock, shall continue in force for more than twenty-one years, commencing from the date of the first rate being taken.

It appears then, my Lord, that Parliament permitted the construction of the said Docks from a conviction that it would be an *improvement to the City of London*, that it would be the cause of *greater security to the Revenue in securing the Cargoes of Ships* EQUAL IN SIZE TO LINE OF BATTLE SHIPS AND OF GREAT NATIONAL IMPORTANCE.

If the Trade is removed to the Out-ports, this improvement will be rendered useless and become a burthen, unless empty warehouses and dry docks can be considered an improvement. The *security arising therefrom to the Revenue is given up*, and the *Cargoes of Ships, equal in size to Line of Battle Ships and of great National importance*, are consequently of no importance. By the construction of the Docks the Revenue will be deteriorated, for had the buildings still

existed which were pulled down to make way for the Docks proposed to be now rendered useless, the inhabitants individually would still have contributed their quota towards the exigencies of the state, which must be now considered a positive loss, as well as the additional loss which will be occasioned by the non-payment of the interest to the individual subscribers; also the non-payment of tythes, assessments, &c. &c.

Secondly. That Parliament permitted individuals to raise large sums of money for the purpose of constructing their Docks. These sums were raised upon the faith of a continuance of the East India Trade to the Port of London, the ships engaged in which Trade were, by the said Act, obliged to enter the Docks, and from the rates paid by the owners of such ships, the individuals were to be paid the interest of the sums advanced by them, and ultimately the principal. If the Docks be rendered useless by a transfer of the trade, how are the individuals to be reimbursed?

Thirdly. So much importance was attached to the early completion of the said Docks, that in Sect. 91 it is expressly directed they should be constructed as soon as possible, and that even statements of their progress should be laid before Parliament yearly, and

Fourthly. It is enacted that none of the Resolutions of Ships unloading or landing in the East India Docks shall continue in force *for more than twenty-one years* from the date the first rate shall be taken:—surely this provision implies, that at all events individuals concerned had a right to look for a continuance of the Trade, which would oblige the entering of ships into the East India Dock *for the twenty-one years*, and upon the faith of such a continuance they became subscribers towards erecting the said Docks.

I shall now refer to an establishment which will be abolished if the Trade is thrown open. I should not have noticed it had it not been a subject which has engaged Parliamentary attention.

By the 37th Geo. III. cap. 74, the Company were enabled to raise and pay the expences of two Regiments of Infantry, to be embodied for the defence and protection of the House and Warehouses of the Company, and for such public services as are mentioned in the said Act.

By the 43d Geo. III. cap. 48, the same Corps was again permitted to be raised, and His Majesty was pleased to accept of the services of the said Brigade of Royal East India Volunteers, and the consent of Parliament was obtained to authorize the charge of the same amongst the ordinary outgoings, charges and expences of the Company. This Corps, whose establishment was ratified by Acts of the Legislature, is to be at once abolished, consisting of Two Thousand men.

Lord CASTLEREAGH, in bringing the matter before Parliament in 1803, stated, “ That
 “ an Act of Parliament had expired relating
 “ to the appropriating of certain parts of
 “ the profits of the East India Company to

“ the support of the Volunteer Corps of the
 “ East India House. His Lordship enlarged
 “ on the utility of the Corps, which he
 “ termed trust-worthy, as being composed
 “ of the different servants of the East India
 “ Company ; the superior officers being per-
 “ sons who filled the higher departments ;
 “ the inferior officers of another class of re-
 “ spectable persons ; and the privates of the
 “ warehousemen, and persons in the lower
 “ situations. Provision had been made by a
 “ former Act for two Battalions, which he
 “ wished to increase to three Battalions.
 “ The propriety of the force being thus raised
 “ and provided for, must be manifest to the
 “ House ; they were to be composed entirely
 “ of men known and employed at the East
 “ India House, *and none could be more*
 “ *worthy of being trusted with the care and*
 “ *preservation of the peace of the Metropolis*
 “ *upon an emergency.* He therefore moved
 “ that the House should resolve itself into
 “ a Committee of the whole House on the
 “ subject.”

The Company's military stores have supplied Government with arms and appointments at a time when a delay in obtaining such stores might have been of great detriment to the state.

Here, my Lord, is a statement of the ruin which will befall so numerous a body of His Majesty's subjects, and the Establishments that will be broken up. Is it then too much to ask for a Statement of the Reasons or Arguments which induced your Lordship to make this sacrifice? For those arguments your Lordship has referred the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the East India Company, to the Petitions from those Out-ports to which it is proposed to remove the East India Trade, I shall avail myself of such permission, remarking at the same time, that in your Lordship's Letter to the Chairs of the 4th ultimo, you explicitly state, "*that you have no difficulty in acquainting them, that the Claims of Merchants connected with the Out-ports, have not been brought before Government by WRITTEN DOCUMENTS.*" And in the following paragraph your Lordship says, "*You*

may obtain from the Records," viz. The WRITTEN Petitions to Parliament, that further information (viz. the representations which have induced His Majesty's Ministers to acquiesce in the Transfer of the Trade) which you appear desirous to possess." Pleading my incapacity to reconcile these two paragraphs, I shall proceed to consider these convincing Petitions, confining myself of course to those from the Out-ports, which the Commissioners of the Excise, in their Report referred to in the Debate in the East India House, on the 22d ultimo, consider as the only Ports, which can, with any degree of safety to the Revenue, or the Country, be thrown open to the India Trade; For, say the Commissioners of Excise, *the other Out-ports appear to us for* VARIOUS REASONS INSUFFICIENT.

The Ports stated by the Commissioners are

HULL

BRISTOL

LIVERPOOL

PLYMOUTH

DOVER, and

PORTSMOUTH.

I shall commence with *Bristol*, the Merchants of which city claim as their birth-right, liberty to trade with Kingdoms gained by His Majesty's arms. That the Company's trade has decreased, whilst Foreigners have competed successfully with the Company, and that such Trade has been obstinately denied to the Subjects of the United Kingdom. That the promise of pecuniary participation held out in 1793, has not been realized, but that the Company has made repeated claims on the Public. That the Petitioners rely on Parliament disregarding any argument that may be advanced in favour of the Company, as their existence will be the ruin of the Naval greatness of Great Britain, and the downfall of its Independence; and upon these grounds they pray that the Trade may be opened.

With respect to the birth-right of the Petitioners to trade with Territories gained by His Majesty's Army, in opposition to Enactments of the Legislature, it is not for me to decide, but it must not be forgotten that the Company's Troops have been the

principal actors in the acquisition of our Indian territories. Does it appear *that Foreigners have competed successfully with the Company*, when the Trade on an average of six years stood as follows: viz.

Annual Average of Exports into	
India	£2,717,802
D ^o D ^o D ^o by Americans and Foreign Europeans	1,389,227
Leaving a Balance in favour of England of	1,328,575
Annual Average of Imports from	
India to England	2,621,606
D ^o D ^o D ^o to America and Foreign Europe	1,206,839
Leaving a Balance in favour of England of	1,414,767

It therefore appears that this Trade so successfully competed by Foreigners, leaves an Annual Balance in favour of England of nearly Three Millions sterling, and that at a time when those Foreigners were able to fit out Vessels for an Indian Voyage at half the

expense of a Vessel fitted out from Great Britain.* How does it appear *that the Indian Trade has been obstinately denied to the people of this country*, when in the last twenty years the Tonnage allotted for the use of individuals, exclusively of that allowed to be exported by the Company's Officers in their own Privilege, amounted to Sixty Thousand Tons; and that during that period only Twenty-two Thousand Tons of every species of Manufacture have been actually engaged and Shipped to India, two-thirds of which Tonnage was occupied by wine, beer, and spirits; and it must not be forgotten that in 1802 the Court of Directors agreed to extend the Tonnage for Private Traders to Six Thousand Tons, instead of Three Thousand Tons annually, or even to allow them as much as they might require, and it appears from indisputable authority, that in the Twenty years abovementioned, very few of the Manufactures of this Country were exported, no application having been made

* See Printed Papers, pages 229 & 230.

by the Manufacturers themselves or their agents, for any part of the Tonnage so allotted.

The promise of pecuniary participation held out in 1793, was conditional, viz. If Peace continued in India. With respect to the claims made on the Public for pecuniary assistance, the Advances from the State on that account do not amount to the Disbursements made by the Company, on account of the several Expeditions fitted out at their expence in India, on account of the Public Service; and upon what ground of equity could the country withhold from the East India Company, that relief which they so lavishly granted to support the credit of individual merchants, the 4th of April, 1811. The Petitioners trust that the House of Commons will disregard any arguments, no matter how convincing, that may be urged in favour of the Company; (I conclude this is the Petition which contains those arguments which have had such weight with your Lordship and His Majesty's Ministers).

The Petitioners further state *that our Naval greatness will be sacrificed by a continuance of the Trade to the East India Company;* how does this agree with my Lord Castlereagh's speech in 1803, wherein his Lordship states, that the Company's Ships of 1200 Tons are fit for Ships of the Line; their Ships of 800 Tons, for Frigates; and their Ships of 500 Tons for Sloops of War. It is not improbable that the *arguments* made use of by the Petitioners, may convince your Lordship that 400 Ton Ships, of which burthen those Ships from the Out-ports are to consist, are equally well adapted for Ships of the Line and Frigates.

The MERCHANT VENTURERS OF BRISTOL come next, *they assert their general right to an open Trade, they state that the same will tend to enlarge the means of diffusing articles of British Manufacture throughout India and the Islands and vast dominions of China and will lead to the discovery of new Channels and unexplored Regions of Commerce. That the freedom of trading to India granted to the*

United States has enabled them to supply the West India Islands to the injury of British Subjects. Here in truth, is an enlarged view of the subject, boundless Regions which are to yield countless Riches. There is to be a voyage of discovery conducted by men who possess not the smallest knowledge of the language, manners or wants of the natives, or of the commerce of India. It is said that the Americans from the privilege granted to them of trading to India have been enabled to supply our West India Colonies to the injury of the British Merchant. Here, my Lord, the cloven foot shews itself. The Open Traders must have the privilege of going direct to the West Indies from India, without coming to Great Britain, for if they come to England first, how can they compete with the Americans? our Revenue cannot but flourish under such an extension!

The BRISTOL DOCK COMPANY have also petitioned; *they represent that they have constructed Docks at great Expence, anticipating an increase of Trade, and that those expectations*

have been disappointed, owing principally to the unexampled state of affairs ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, AND therefore pray that the Indian Trade may be thrown open. The claims of the Dock Companies of London for the protection of the Legislature are surely as strong as those of the Bristol Dock Company, nay stronger, for the East India Dock Company constructed their Docks specifically for India Shipping: the Bristol Dock Company in consequence of an increase in their Trade: these Petitioners, unlike the rest of their Brethren, candidly admit that which must be evident to the unbiassed mind of every individual, *that the unexampled state of affairs on the Continent of Europe is the sole cause of the stagnation of Trade.*

The Commissioners of Excise it appears state in their Report already alluded to, *that the passage up the Bristol Channel furnishes great opportunities for landing goods clandestinely, especially for the last twenty miles, and in consequence of the late alterations, the*

Shipping lies afloat in the midst of that City, without any other security than the locking of the Hatchways and other Communications with the Cargo.

The MERCHANTS OF KINGSTON-UPON-HULL I shall next allude to; their Petition contains arguments no doubt equally as convincing to your Lordship as the Petition from Bristol, being nearly similar in point of doctrine, excepting that the *Town of Hull is situated on a great estuary, the Humber communicating by inland Navigation with the principal Manufacturing districts, and therefore affording greater opportunities for smuggling.*

The DOCK COMPANY at KINGSTON-UPON-HULL have also petitioned, their claims cannot be considered better founded than those of the Bristol Dock Company.

The Commissioners of Excise state in their Report, *that the run to Hull from the Channel may perhaps be reckoned equivalent to the*

Navigation up the River Thames, and no Ships from the East Indies should be permitted to pass round the north of Scotland. There is great danger of smuggling within the Humber.

The PETITION FROM PLYMOUTH is entirely barren of argument, and they rest their hopes upon the general assertion that the whole of His Majesty's subjects have a right to participate in the India Trade, and therefore pray that the same may be opened.

The PORTS OF DOVER and PORTSMOUTH come next. It does not appear that those places have petitioned Parliament. Their gratitude to the Commissioners of the Excise for including them in so beneficial an extension ought to be sincere.

The Commissioners state, *that the Ships enter into Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Dover, immediately from the Sea, and the passage is shorter than to London, but the security is also by Locks only and Tidesmen.*

The PETITION FROM THE LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS, contains as little argument as that from Plymouth. The Petition from the CORPORATION OF LIVERPOOL states, *that an ample field is now open for the investment of that capital which has hitherto been employed in other channels of Trade ; and that whilst they lament the distressing suspension of Commerce at this juncture, they cannot but believe that the æra is now arrived when relief may be granted.* These, my Lord, are the arguments of the Corporation.

The LIVERPOOL DOCK COMPANY state, *that by the enterprize of its inhabitants, it has raised itself from the situation of an humble fishing town to the distinguished rank and importance of the second port in the kingdom ; that being heard by the Merchants at large two years ago, when the Trade was in great prosperity, they obtained leave to construct larger Docks for general purposes.*

The Liverpool Dock Company admit that their town has been raised from the situation

of a fishing town to the distinguished rank of the second port in the kingdom ; *this has been effected entirely without the Indian Trade* ; surely some check ought to be given to their ambition. I confess I am at a loss to understand upon what grounds that policy is founded which has for its object the destruction of the Capital of a kingdom to benefit its Out-ports ; it is like drawing the blood from the heart to support the extremities.

The Commissioners of Excise are said to state in their Report, *that the entrance into Liverpool from the West is not of great length, and for the most part is open* ; BUT NOTHING CAN BE BETTER CALCULATED FOR SMUGGLING, NOTWITHSTANDING THE CARE OF TIDESMEN ON SHIP BOARD AND THE VIGILANCE OF A NIGHTLY WATCH, THAN THE DOCKS AT THIS PORT—OPEN ON ALL SIDES AND SURROUNDED BY SHIPS, WAREHOUSES, PUBLIC HOUSES AND OTHER BUILDINGS.

Here then, my Lord, is a statement of the Petitions from the only ports to which your

Revenue Commissioners consider it safe to extend the open Trade; here is also a statement of the principal arguments made use of in those Petitions, with the few observations I have been induced to make thereon; and the opinion of the Commissioners of Excise as to the facilities which these ports afford for smuggling.

It must naturally be supposed that His Majesty's Ministers will be guided by the opinions of those Commissioners who are especially appointed by His Majesty's Government to guard the revenue from any deterioration. The opinions of the Commissioners of Excise, already quoted, are in direct opposition to an extension of the East India Trade to the Out Ports: and I have been given to understand that the Commissioners of the Customs, in their Report to the Lords of the Treasury, express their opinions in the most decided terms against such extension, as the same would be pregnant with danger to the Revenue,

and with ruin to the individuals who might be induced to embark in an extended Trade.

I have now, my Lord, arrived at that part of the India question, which must, in every point of view, be considered the most important. I have been led to consider the Commercial concerns of the Company, as connected with this country in the abstract; but, my Lord, I shall now look at the question in the light in which it must be viewed when brought before Parliament, viz. that of a great Political Question, involving the interests and happiness of thousands in this country, as connected with its commerce, but affecting the whole Population of Great Britain, as connected with the preservation of our Constitution:—and when considered as relating to India, involving the happiness, indeed the very existence, of Fifty Millions of our fellow creatures! I confess the magnitude of the subject alarms me;* because I see it possible that an ill-judged policy may be

* The Sum total necessary to carry on the concern of the Company, is £51,182,127. Vide Printed Papers, No. 1. p. 59.

the cause of demolishing a magnificent structure which has existed for upwards of two centuries, supported by an honorable Body, who have at all times waived personal considerations for the benefit of their country.

You, my Lord, in conjunction with His Majesty's Ministers, inform the Court of Directors, that you are willing to bring before Parliament a proposition for the renewal of the Company's Charter, provided the Company will give up their exclusive privileges of Trade; or in other words, permit the Trade to and from India to be opened. The Court agrees that the Trade shall be opened, but that the same should be confined to the Port of London. This stipulation the Court has supported by arguments most conclusive.

These arguments appear, in your Lordship's opinion, to have been successfully rebutted by those more cogent ones urged by the Petitioners from the Out-ports,* and

* See pages 52 a 62.

upon these arguments your Lordship relies for the support of Parliament, in depriving the East India Company of a privilege which they refuse to surrender in the unconditional manner demanded of them; because they consider that by so doing, they shall place themselves in that situation which will render it utterly impossible for them to fulfil the duties Commercial and Political, devolving upon them, in a manner satisfactory to themselves and beneficial to the country.

The conduct of the Court of Directors in the negociation, as far as an individual is capable of judging from the papers before the public, must be considered highly honorable. It is such as must retort upon those persons who hope to support the cause of the Petitioners, by imputing to the Directors interested motives for the line of conduct they have pursued (viz. the preservation of their patronage), the calumnious and unfounded assertion.

The Court of Directors frankly declares

the well-grounded fears it entertains, that the affairs of India cannot be conducted with benefit to this country, if an open trade from the Out-ports be permitted; as the same must lead to an unfettered intercourse with India, and not all the regulations which may be devised will prevent colonization, and the alienation of British India from this country will close the fatal project.

To strengthen the well grounded fears which are entertained respecting *Colonization*, I shall refer to the arguments of the favorite author of the Open traders, Adam Smith, already alluded to in this Letter: in following up his opinions on the baneful effects of Monopolies, he says, “ That the
 “ spirit of exclusive companies is unfavour-
 “ able to the growth of new colonies, and
 “ has probably been the cause of the little
 “ progress which has been made in coloniza-
 “ tion in India.” Is there any man, my Lord, when adverting to America, can say that Colonization is not to be dreaded? This doctrine *practically* followed, has lost you

America ! This doctrine rejected by the Directors of the East India Company, has preserved India to Great Britain !

It is on this broad principle that the Court of Directors and the Company stand forward, for the preservation of their exclusive privileges, which can alone enable them to avert such disastrous consequences. Does this conduct bear the mark of interested motives, my Lord ? The Court of Directors by acquiescing in the proposition of His Majesty's Ministers, would secure to themselves the patronage so much talked of, but the Court will not accept it in exchange for the interests of their Constituents and their Country.

The country is told that it is ridiculous to fancy that the Constitution of England can be affected by any change which may be made in the political or commercial situation of the East India Company. My Lord, the Constitution will be affected ; into whose hands will the Government of India, and the

Patronage appertaining thereto devolve, if the Company be deprived of it? Why, into the hands of the Minister of the day; and that patronage, when engrossed by an individual, would fortify the Minister who could persuade the Parliament of this country to accede to such a measure, with a phalanx which will place him in a situation to bid defiance to his Prince and to the People of England.

The occurrences of 1783 bear ample proof that the country then felt that the Constitution would have been endangered had the Minister succeeded in getting possession of the Government of India and the Patronage attached thereto. Is there less danger to be apprehended from such an attempt at the present moment?

Mr. PITT, on the 14th January, 1784, in proposing his Bill to Parliament, said, “ *That*
“ *in the Bill which he proposed to move for,*
“ *he had governed himself by the ideas of the*
“ *Proprietors of India Stock, and by THE*

“ SENSE OF THOSE MEN WHO WERE MOST HABITU-
 “ ATED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBJECT.”

On the 6th July, 1784, Mr. PITT said,
 “ *Government and Commerce were the two*
 “ *great objects to be looked to.* THE COMMERCE
 “ OF THE COMPANY BELONGED EXCLUSIVELY TO
 “ THEM. THE COMMERCE THEREFORE TO AND
 “ FROM INDIA, HE MEANT TO LEAVE WHERE IT
 “ OUGHT TO BE LEFT — IN THE HANDS OF THE
 “ COMPANY. It had, he remarked, been held,
 “ that Commercial Companies could not go-
 “ vern Empires ; but that was a matter of
 “ speculation which general experience pro-
 “ ved to be not true in practice, however
 “ universally admitted in theory. THE EAST
 “ INDIA COMPANY HAD CONDUCTED ITS COM-
 “ MERCE AND GOVERNED VAST EMPIRES FOR MANY
 “ YEARS, AND IT WAS TO BE REMEMBERED THAT
 “ THE EAST INDIA COMPANY WAS NO NEW ES-
 “ TABLISHMENT, IT RESTED ON CHARTERS AND
 “ ACTS OF PARLIAMENT ; THOSE CHARTERS OUGHT
 “ UNDOUBTEDLY TO BE REGARDED, AND AS FAR AS
 “ POSSIBLE THE RIGHTS EXERCISED AND ENJOYED
 “ UNDER THEM, OUGHT TO BE HELD SACRED.”

Mr. PITT, on the 11th March, 1793, expressed himself in the following words:—

“ *I have no hesitation in saying, that when all*
 “ *the circumstances are fully before the*
 “ *House, I am confident that a *Renewal of the**
 “ *Company’s Charter will appear to be much*
 “ *for the interest of the country.*—It has been
 “ said that since the publication of the speech
 “ of my right honourable friend (Mr. Dun-
 “ das) every body believes that the Charter
 “ will be renewed: and I am glad to hear
 “ that such is the case, because it can only
 “ arise from a public conviction, that the
 “ renewal of the Charter, upon the terms
 “ and upon the regulations on which the
 “ East-India Company have agreed to accept
 “ it, will be much for the interest of this
 “ country in every point of view.”

Mr. PITT, on the 24th May, 1793, proceeded to examine the observations made by Mr. Fox upon the Commercial and political arrangements in the bill. He (Mr. F.) had had recourse to the *common place topic*, that a free trade was preferable to a monopoly,

insisting that the House ought not to forget this principle, unless very good reasons should be given for adopting a contrary one. *This speculation*, Mr. Pitt said, had been *repeated a thousand times* by much *less ingenious men* than the right hon. member, and scarcely could have been expected to have been resorted to, *as the force of it had been done away* by his right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas) when he first opened the subject, bottoming his argument, *not on vague speculation* but on *inferences drawn from history and from authenticated accounts*. Here Mr. Pitt asked *whether the claims of the manufacturers had not been listened to and provided for, and whether the exclusive privilege of the Company had not been rendered subservient to the resources of the Empire?*

LORD GRENVILLE in the House of Lords on the 3d June, 1793, said that if it were necessary for him to enter at large into any general detail on the subject of our possessions in India, or any speculative discussion with respect to the mode in which India

ought to be governed, and in which the trade of that country ought to be carried on, it would open a very wide and extensive field indeed; but, in the present case, it did not appear to him that this was in any shape necessary, because he felt that the ground he had to go on was very much narrowed, by having a just and well-founded experience as a guide; a guide which was at all times perhaps the best, but more particularly so under such circumstances as existed at present. *Nine years experience had proved the benefit of the present system and there appeared therefore no just reason why it should be altered.* The present bill of course assumed for its principle the continuance of that system; but as ideas had been entertained by some, that in the hands of the East-India Company, the trade to India was confined within narrower limits than would be the case were it open to be engaged in by the whole capital and the whole spirit of enterprise of this country; provisions were now, for the first time, introduced into the present bill, which would give an opportunity for

trying the experiment, by allowing merchants and traders to adventure on their own bottom under certain NECESSARY regulations.

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS, in April, 1793, said in the House of Commons: “With respect
 “to the Renewal of the Company’s exclu-
 “sive Charter to trade to India; I have al-
 “ready said, *that I do not object to it.....*
 “*I very much question the possibility of in-*
 “*creasing our exports to India to any material*
 “*amount, I mean with a rational security of*
 “*finding a profitable vent for them. Except*
 “military stores, ammunition, and other im-
 “plements of war, with which it is not your
 “true policy to furnish the Indian princes,
 “the manufactures of England can hardly be
 “said to be saleable in India beyond the
 “trifling amount necessary for the consump-
 “tion of Europeans.”

LORD MELVILLE, in the House of Commons, in April, 1793, stated, as his full conviction, after mature consideration, that if the Indian Patronage should be vested and concentrated

immediately in the Crown, the weight of it would be too great in the balance of our Government, and might prove dangerous to the Constitution.*

LORD MELVILLE, in his Letter to the Chairman of the East India Company, dated the 2d of April, 1800, says—"That the ostensible
 " form of Government with all its consequent
 " extent and detail of patronage, *must remain*
 " *as it is*, I am persuaded will never be called
 " in question by any but those *who may be*
 " *disposed to sacrifice the freedom and security*
 " *of our Constitution to their own personal*
 " *aggrandizement and ill-directed ambition.*
 " I remain equally satisfied as to the pro-
 " priety of continuing a monopoly of the
 " trade in the hands of the East India Com-
 " pany. Those who maintain the reverse,
 " appear to me, *to be misled by general theory,*
 " *without attending to the peculiar circum-*
 " *stances of the trade they are speaking of.*

* In this opinion Mr. Pitt perfectly agreed.

See Debate 24th May, 1793.

“The great interest to be attended to on
 “the part of the Company, is, *that no goods*
 “*come from India that are not deposited in*
 “*the Company's Warehouses, and that the*
 “*goods so imported are disposed of at the*
 “*Company's Sales, agreeably to the rules*
 “*prescribed for that purpose.*”

Lord MELVILLE, in his Letter to
 dated the 21st March, 1801, says,
 “THE PRESERVATION OF THE MONOPOLY OF THE
 “EAST INDIA COMPANY IS ESSENTIALLY REQUI-
 “SITE FOR THE SECURITY OF EVERY IMPORTANT
 “INTEREST CONNECTED WITH OUR INDIAN EM-
 “PIRE: AND SO DEEPLY AM I IMPRESSED WITH
 “THE TRUTH OF THIS PROPOSITION, THAT I AM
 “PREPARED EXPLICITLY TO DECLARE, THAT AL-
 “THOUGH THE FIRST FORMATION OF AN EAST
 “INDIA COMPANY PROCEEDED FROM PURELY
 “COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE MAGNITUDE
 “AND IMPORTANCE TO WHICH THE EAST INDIA
 “COMPANY HAS PROGRESSIVELY ADVANCED, IS
 “NOW SO INTERWOVEN WITH THE POLITICAL
 “INTERESTS OF THE EMPIRE, AS TO CREATE UPON
 “MY MIND A FIRM CONVICTION *that the main-*

“tenance of the monopoly of the East India
 “Company, is even more important to the po-
 “litical interests of the State, than it is to the
 “commercial interests of the Company.”

My Lord Castlereagh's opinion in the de-
 bate on the Indian Budget, 18th July, 1806,
 was as follows: “It seemed, however, unjust
 “to describe the Company's commerce as car-
 “ried on at a loss. To what precise extent it
 “might be profitable, after providing a liberal
 “dividend to the proprietors, might be a matter
 “of more difficult calculation, and must, like
 “all commercial results, be in its nature fluc-
 “tuating; but, in reasoning upon this branch
 “of the Company's affairs, the worthy Alder-
 “man, (Mr. Prinsep) must establish several
 “preliminary facts, before he can expect to
 “persuade Parliament that the commercial
 “existence of the Company is to be considered
 “merely on grounds of mercantile profit. He
 “must be prepared to shew that individuals
 “would be as likely to carry on steadily the
 “commerce of India, under all the fluctuations
 “to which such a trade is liable, where the

“ outgoings are great, and the returns distant,
 “ as a great trading Corporation. He must
 “ be prepared to dispel the apprehensions which
 “ must be entertained with respect to the inju-
 “ rious influence on the prosperity of India,
 “ which may be the consequence of an unsteady
 “ and unequal demand for their produce, be-
 “ fore he can expect to satisfy Parliament that
 “ an intercourse, perfectly unrestrained, is pre-
 “ ferable to that qualified intercourse, partly
 “ free and partly restricted, which now pre-
 “ vails. If he assumes, that individuals by
 “ using an inferior description of tonnage,
 “ could carry on the trade at less expense, and
 “ consequently at greater profit, he must be
 “ prepared to shew, that this is not merely by
 “ throwing the difference of the expense on the
 “ public, by rendering numerous and expensive
 “ convoys requisite to protect their feeble ves-
 “ sels in time of war, whilst the Company’s
 “ ships, with a comparatively slight aid from
 “ our navy, are competent to protect each
 “ other, and to set the enemy’s ships of war,
 “ even when in considerable force, at defiance.
 “ He must be prepared to shew, that such an

“ establishment as that of the Company, could
“ be kept up without the protection of a quali-
“ fied monopoly ; or that such a system is in
“ itself unnecessary to the political existence
“ of the Company, and the management of
“ large territorial revenues, when both in peace
“ and in war funds must be transferred through
“ the medium of commerce from India to
“ Europe, and from Europe to India. He
“ must also shew, before he can establish that
“ the interest of the manufacturer at home is
“ interested in such a change, that individual
“ speculators would be disposed to send out
“ British manufactures, even at some loss, as
“ the Company have frequently done, or that
“ there is any other limit to the amount of this
“ description of Export, on the part of the
“ Company, than the utmost quantity the
“ Indian market can take off, which they
“ have not hitherto been able, with their most
“ strenuous efforts and some sacrifices, to
“ carry beyond £2,000,000 a year. These,
“ and many other important doubts must be
“ solved, before any satisfactory or sound con-
“ clusion can be come to, on the great practical

“ question (*Private Trade*), to which the wor-
 “ thy Alderman, somewhat out of time, had
 “ been solicitous to point the attention of the
 “ Committee.”

The authorities here mentioned, my Lord,
 go directly to state that the Trade and Go-
 vernment of India are interwoven, and ought
 not to be separated: and the Select Com-
 mittee of the House of Commons on Indian
 Affairs, in July, 1812, reports as follows, viz.

The Committee, after declaring that they
 felt it a part of their duty to offer some ac-
 count of the nature and history of the ex-
 tensive establishments for the internal ad-
 ministration of India, “ trust that such an
 “ account will be acceptable to the House,
 “ not only as shewing the importance and
 “ utility of the establishments themselves,
 “ to the welfare and order of the country,
 “ but as evincing the *unremitting anxiety*
 “ that has influenced the efforts of those to
 “ whom the government of our Indian pos-
 “ sessions has been consigned, to establish a

“system of administration best calculated to
 “promote the confidence, and conciliate the
 “feelings of the native inhabitants, not less by
 “a respect for their own institutions, than by
 “the endeavour gradually to engraft upon
 “them such improvements, as might shield,
 “under the safeguard of equal laws, every
 “class of the people from the oppressions of
 “power, and communicate to them that sense
 “of protection and assurance of justice, which
 “is the efficient spring of all public prosperity
 “and happiness.”

Is it possible for opinions to be expressed
 more decidedly, and in language less am-
 biguous than those here quoted? They are
 such opinions, my Lord, as I trust will bear
 the Company out in the firm stand which
 they are obliged to make in defence of their
 liberties and interest, as well as those of
 their country.

My Lord, you have a duty to perform of
 no common nature; you have to stem the
 torrent of popular clamor, which increases

in proportion as its exorbitant demands are opposed; you have a duty to perform to your country, which is paramount to any other consideration. It is utterly impossible, my Lord, that any man deliberating calmly on the subject can form an erroneous opinion: it is not a temporary relief to His Majesty's Treasury that can justify an acquiescence in an ill-founded demand: common reason forbids us to renounce a positive benefit in favour of a theoretical advantage; so must a sense of duty command your Lordship, not to leave the interest of those who have a claim equally well-founded to the protection of the Legislature, and on whom the employment and subsistence of thousands, and the existence of millions depend, to the uncertain issue of SPECULATION and EXPERIMENT.

The very existence of the Company at the present moment, after struggling through two centuries of difficulty and embarrassment must excite wonder; and when we contemplate the revolutions in India, which

have obliged the Company to act as a War-like as well as a Commercial Body, and which revolutions have thrown into their hands such a large portion of territory, as places them at least on a level in respect of the number and opulence of the people living under their government, with the greatest Sovereigns of Asia, we cannot refrain from expressing our admiration of the councils and abilities which have directed the Company through such struggles; and we must feel disposed to rest with perfect security the continuance of such powers in that body which has already exercised them with so much benefit to Great Britain, and to the natives of India who are freed from the calamities of war, by the government of the Company, and exempt from the extortions and perpetual convulsions which they suffered under their former Mahomedan governments.

The character of the Natives of India requires the most delicate attention, and no fea-

ture in that character is so strongly marked as their attachment to their established opinions. It has been truly observed by a venerable Governor of India, that "the touch of chance, or the breath of opinion, might dissolve the British power in India."

In the event of the annihilation of the Company's power, that respect which the Natives at present entertain towards the Company would be lost. It could not be explained to them, nor could they comprehend how a conqueror could experience the vicissitude of being reduced to nothing, by a mandate from a foreign land; they would conceive the power which had sent such a mandate equally fleeting and dissolving in its character.

If I were at a loss for an apology in thus addressing your Lordship, I know no Nobleman to whom I could appeal with so great a hope of forgiveness, for the liberty I have taken, more particularly when I assure your

Lordship that I have been actuated solely
by the view of benefiting my Country.

FABIUS.

LONDON,

27th February, 1818.



Friendship that I have been actuated solely
by the view of benefiting my Country.

FABRUS

LONDON

27th February 1813.



A letter to the Right Honorable the Earl of Buckinghamshire, president of
the board of commissioners for the affairs of India on the subject of an
open trade to India

London 1813

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